

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Scrutiny Committee – 13 February 2013

FOURTH SCRUTINY REVIEW: MEMBER OFFICER GROUPS**Report by Depute Director (The Environment Service)****ABSTRACT**

This report outlines the scope of the fourth scrutiny review to be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee. The purpose of the review is to examine the effectiveness of Member Officer Groups (MOGs) and how they can be improved to support the delivery of better outcomes for our communities.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:
- i) Approves the content of this report, including the scope and terms of reference outlined in Appendix 1; and
 - ii) Agrees that a final report and findings from the review is submitted to the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 12 June 2013.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Scrutiny reviews are an important part of the work of the Scrutiny Committee. A decision on the topic area for review is based on the potential for the review to result in recommendations for change that will deliver measurable improvements. Topics for review may be identified by considering: audit reports; performance management reports; information gathered via surveys and feedback mechanisms; issues raised by representative groups e.g. community councils, resident groups and community groups; issues raised by partner organisations; complaints; and issues raised directly by the public.
- 2.2 To date the Committee has undertaken three reviews:
- Implementation of grounds maintenance policy in 2009 (findings reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 16 September 2009);
 - Integration of policy in respect of the More Choices, More Chances policy area in 2010 (findings reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 23 February 2011); and
 - Learning from complaints and customer feedback in 2011 (findings reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 28 March 2012).

3 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 In selecting the topic of the fourth scrutiny review, the Scrutiny Committee considered a number of suggestions received against a set of review selection criteria. As a result of this process it was agreed on 30 November 2012 that the Scrutiny Committee would focus its fourth review on Member Officer Groups (MOGs). Member Officer Groups are an important part of the Council's decision making structure and the purpose of the review will be to consider the effectiveness of these groups and how they can be improved to support better outcomes for our communities.
- 3.2 Members of the Scrutiny Committee met on 18 January 2013 to discuss further the scope of the proposed review. The agreed scope and full terms of reference for the review is contained in Appendix 1 to this report.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Head of Democratic Services and the Democratic Services Manager have been consulted in the preparation of this report. All elected members were asked for suggestions for the fourth review.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The review will require time commitment from Scrutiny Committee members out with Committee meetings. It will also require time dedicated from officers from The Environment Service, Education and Children's Services, Housing and Community Care and the Chief Executive's Service as required.

6 COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009 – 2012

- 6.1 The work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee contributes to the achievement of all Corporate Objectives:
- (i) A Safe, Secure and Welcoming Environment
 - (ii) Healthy, Caring Communities
 - (iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
 - (iv) Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens
 - (v) Confident, Active and Inclusive Communities

7 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Council's Corporate Equalities Assessment Framework requires an assessment of functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant equality categories. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new policies to ensure there is no adverse impact on any community group or employees.

- 7.2 The review scope presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Assessment Framework and the determination was made that the items summarised in this report do not require further assessment as it does not constitute a function, policy, procedure or strategy that will have an impact on people's well-being.

8 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).
- 8.2 The plan presented in this report was considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the determination was made that the development is unlikely to have any significant effects on any of the areas defined in the SEA Guidance.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Council's commitment to continuous improvement and effective challenge and scrutiny is reflected in the current remits of the themed committees, the Scrutiny Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The scoping document for a review of the Member Officer Groups allows the Scrutiny Committee to further develop their overall approach in relation to supporting continuous improvement across the Council.

**BARBARA RENTON
DEPUTE DIRECTOR (THE ENVIRONMENT SERVICE)**

Note: No Background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing above report.

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REVIEW OF MEMBER OFFICER GROUPS

SCOPE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (FEBRUARY – JUNE 2013)

Background and Rationale

Member Officer Groups provide an opportunity for elected members and officers to consider particular areas of strategy in more detail than at Committee and in a more informal setting. Member Officer Groups consider proposals in detail prior to consideration at full committee and are an important part of the Council's decision making structure.

The Council has successfully used Member Officer Groups on both an ad-hoc and standing basis to address 'cross-cutting' strategic areas and to direct change within the organisation.

Following the Council elections in 2012, a review of the Council's political decision making structures was undertaken. The final report approved on 19 December 2012 included a proposal to retain the existing model for Member Officer Groups.

Since the elections in May 2012, the following Member Officer Groups (MOGs) have been re-established: Modernising Governance; Affordable Housing; Corporate Parenting; Equality and Diversity; and Planning.

The Scrutiny Committee has selected Member Officer Groups as the topic of its fourth Scrutiny Review to consider the effectiveness of these groups and how they might be improved to support the delivery of better outcomes for our communities.

Objectives of the Review

- Examine the remits of the MOGs to identify whether they are relevant and appropriate to effectively support Committees in delivering the strategic objectives of Perth and Kinross.
- Investigate how the MOGs operate and whether they adhere to the parameters set out within the Scheme of Administration.
- Consider the operation of the MOGs to identify opportunities for good practice and demonstrate how they add value to the Council's decision making process.

Scope of the Review:

What will be included?

The review will include the Member Officer Groups (MOGs) which have been re-established since May 2012:

- Modernising Governance
- Affordable Housing
- Corporate Parenting
- Equality and Diversity
- Planning

What will not be included?

The review will not include MOGs which were not re-instated post May 2012 or any other informal member officer working relationships.

Who will be involved?

- Scrutiny Committee
- Elected members across Council Committees and MOGs
- Officers across Council Services
- Democratic Services
- Colleagues from best practice Councils
- Colleagues from external organisations where relevant

Methods that will be used to undertake the review?

The research methodology agreed is:

- Desk top analysis of existing information – Scheme of Administration, MOG remits, review of political decision making, findings from earlier reviews of MOGs, agendas and minutes.
- Benchmarking visits – if required
- Focus groups with elected members
- Focus groups with officers
- Discussions/ interviews with external representatives e.g. colleagues from other Councils and external organisations where relevant
- Presentations of information as required

Evidence Required

- MOG papers – reports, agendas and minutes
- Inspection reports
- Evaluation of member and officer experiences
- Evaluation of impact and evidence of good practice

Resources Required

- Member time out with Committee to attend review meetings and participate in research and consultation.
- Officer time (The Environment Service, Education and Children's Services, Housing and Community Care and the Chief Executive's Service).